

REMARKS

Formal Matters

Claims 15-28 are pending after entry of the amendments set forth herein.

By this Amendment, new claims 18-28 have been added. Support for the newly added claims is found throughout the specification and the drawings. Accordingly, no new matter has been added.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application in view of the amendments and remarks made herein.

Objections to the Specification

The Abstract was objected to due to its excessive length and certain language. Applicant believes that the amendment made to the Abstract addresses each of the objections.

While not objected to, paragraph 0043 has been amended to correct for a typographical error.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 15-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Peterson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,152,937).

The Examiner equates the limitations of the claimed invention to the connector of Peterson et al. In particular, the Examiner equates the base with internal struts 14, the leading segment with a finger 18, a rear segment with an opposing finger 18, a hinge zone with the portion of the structure between struts 14 and finger 18, and the torsion member with engagement members 16. Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's characterization of Peterson's connector.

The plurality of axially extending fingers 18 of Peterson's connector are structurally and functionally identical to each other, and may be employed within a vessel in any orientation with respect to the vessel. In other words, there is not a leading finger or a rear finger. Additionally, engagement members 16 are basically pins having sharpened ends with which to pierce a graft (see col. 8, lines 65-67). They are situated between fingers 18 in an alternating or interposed fashion. As such, the engagement members 16 are physically disassociated with what the Examiner defines as the "hinge zone" and with fingers 18. Moreover, engagement members 16 are functionally independent from the so-called hinge zone and fingers 18, and nothing in Peterson disclosure indicates otherwise. In other

words, the engagement members 16 do not enable fingers 18 to be "torsionally deflected about the hinge zone."

For at least these reasons, Peterson et al. does not anticipate any of the previously pending or newly added claims. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the claims.

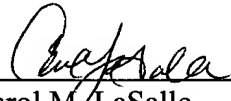
Conclusion

Applicant submits that all of the claims are in condition for allowance, which action is requested. If the Examiner finds that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any underpayment of fees associated with this communication, including any necessary fees for extensions of time, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0815, order number CNVG-007CIP.

Respectfully submitted,
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